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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISTANBUL 001759

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ISTANBUL GOVERNOR COMMENTS ON TERRORIST ATTACKS

REF: A. ISTANBUL 1703

[1](#)B. ISTANBUL 1711

[1](#)C. ISTANBUL 1744

[1](#)D. ISTANBUL 1752

Classified By: Consul General David Arnett for reasons 1.5 (b & d)

[1](#)1. (U) After examining sites of the November 15 and 20 terrorist attacks, the Ambassador visited the Istanbul Mayor and Governor on November 24 to extend the condolences of the United States and to offer

any further assistance that might be required during the investigations

Istanbul Governor Muammer Guler, who supervises all of the Istanbul police and security services, offered the following comments on the terrorist attacks and the ongoing investigations.

[1](#)2. (SBU) "We Must Remain Strong": Guler noted that Istanbul had been both physically and psychologically unprepared for the attacks. Additionally, following the November 15 attacks on the synagogues, law enforcement authorities were more focused on the investigation than on preventing further attacks. Despite the shock, however, Guler echoed Prime Minister Erdogan's remarks by saying that as the investigation continues, Turkey must remain strong and continue to preserve its democracy, respect for human rights, and ongoing European Union reforms

After all, Guler said, "This is what the terrorists were targeting."

[1](#)3. (C) An International Struggle: Sharing views on Al-Qaeda and its methods, Guler stressed the importance of international cooperation in meeting this threat. He thanked the Ambassador for U.S. assistance, noting that there has already been excellent cooperation and exchange o

intelligence. The Governor detailed some of the additional security measures that have been taken since the attacks, particularly to protec

such public sites as airports, bridges, and shopping malls, in addition

to sites that might be associated with those countries supporting the U.S. in its Coalition of the Willing (e.g., Italy, Bulgaria, Japan). H

admitted that closing off public streets is not always possible, but that the police are looking for the right balance between security and other concerns.

[1](#)4. (C) Investigations Continue: Guler told the Ambassador that the police have already gathered good evidence from the November 15 bombings. Echoing his Police Chief's public criticism of the local press, the Governor suggested that the failure to respect the sensitivity of the investigative process (i.e., the publication of the names of suspects and accomplices) may have hindered the ability of the

police to prevent the second bombings. Without providing specific details, Guler implied that there are "signs" that there may be further

attacks.

[1](#)5. (SBU) The Ambassador noted that the defender's resources are finite and the terrorist's targets nearly endless, but he offered several suggestions that the Governor absorbed with keen interest. The Ambassador pointed out that the color-coded threat alert system in the U.S. had drawn criticism but that it had also applied real pressure on terrorist planners. Similarly, he said, although it may be impossible to close off more than a few streets in a metropolis like Istanbul, random vehicle checks along streets with potential target buildings would complicate and perhaps negate attack plans.

[1](#)6. (U) The Ambassador also suggested that the Governor might meet with top security officials from New York City, including former Mayor

Guiliani, in order to benefit from their experience in dealing with the

aftermath of terrorist attacks and preventing future attacks. [Note: NYC Mayor Bloomberg and Istanbul Mayor Gurtuna have already exchanged visits. Istanbul's U.S. Sister City is Houston, but the Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is looking into the possibility of formalizing another Sister City relationship between NYC and Istanbul. Mission will pursue this proposal.

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